

Safety Sentinel

Back to School
Special Edition 2016

Fond du Lac County Safety Committee Mission Statement

It is the Fond du Lac County Safety Committee's mission to provide safety awareness, education, and advocacy to all Fond du Lac County employees, while recognizing it is both the employer and employee's responsibility to maintain a safe work environment.

Beating Back to School Anxiety

The transition into a new school year can be a time of excitement . . . and stress. Children and adults can become anxious, irritable or depressed by this major change. The trick to fighting the back-to-school anxiety is to start



preparing well ahead of the first day of school, Dr. Dan Jolivet, a Licensed Clinical Psychologist and Vice President of Clinical Services with Magellan Behavioral Health, shares how:

Kindergarten through fifth grade - kids need to talk

- **Talk about it** — Talk with your elementary age children about their excitement, stressing the benefits (seeing their friends, playing sports, etc.).
- **Give them some control** — Be firm that they do have to go to school, but give them control over some simple choices, like buying or bringing lunch or riding the bus or riding their bike to school.

Teens want you to listen

- **Keep communication lines open** — Teens want you to listen to their back-to-school concerns— but not judge. Do everything possible to keep the lines of communication open at this critical age.
- **Look for patterns** — A wild new hairdo? No problem. Purple hair AND scary new friends AND a drop in grades? Now it's time to worry.

Adult students need encouragement, too

- **Focus on your goals** — Remind yourself why you are going back to school (better job, more money, etc.).
- **Remember that you're not alone** — Remind yourself that other “non-traditional students” have made it through this, and that it's normal to be a little anxious or fearful.

Safety Lights Required on School Buses under New State Law

A new law went into effect this month that requires school buses across the Badger State to adopt a new set of amber lights, giving warning to motorists that a bus is preparing to stop.

"The new law is called an eight light warning system," said Sgt. Carrie Johnson of the Wisconsin State Patrol. "It deals with amber lights with the red lights, so now, the school bus drivers [are] going to activate the amber lights which, in turn, give[s] the public a notice that the school bus is actually going to be stopping."

The new light system is not only for the safety of students on the bus, but also motorists on the road.

"It's a safety feature for everybody," Johnson said. "All motorists, not only for the students on the bus and driver."

Lisa Carroll has two children in the Wausau School District and said the new law will put her mind at ease before sending her kids to the bus stop in just a few weeks.

"Any kind of mandatory lights added to the back of the bus is probably an excellent idea," Carroll said. "Bus safety is the most important thing I can think of, especially during school hours."



Carroll adds that the volume of traffic on the roads makes the law a necessity.

But Sgt. Johnson thinks the new law is a little bit overdue.

"This is something we probably should've done a while ago," Johnson said. "But at least we're doing it now, jumping on board, and I think it will be a good law for everybody."

Wisconsin is the last state in the nation to adopt these safety measures.

Source: www.waow.com

Work Zone Safety – It's in your Hands

Starting Oct. 1, 2016, it will be illegal to talk on a handheld mobile device while driving in a Wisconsin road work zone.

[View 2015 Wisconsin Act 308](#)

The law is part of ongoing efforts to reduce distracted driving and increase safety for motorists and workers throughout the state. Drivers caught in violation face fines of up to \$40 on first offense and \$100 for subsequent offenses.

Following the law is simple. Just remember:
Orange cones – Put down the phones!

Why is Wisconsin doing this?

Mobile devices continue to be a leading cause of distracted driving throughout the United States. Given that Wisconsin sees an average of nearly 2,000 work zone crashes annually, the new law is a proactive step toward increasing safety and helping to ensure that drivers are giving as much of their attention as possible to the road. Wisconsin is one of 14 states with a full or partial ban on hand-held mobile devices while driving, according to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

What about hands-free devices?

Hands-free and Bluetooth devices are granted exemptions and remain legal to use. However, some studies are beginning to show that even hands-free devices can take a driver's attention off the road.

Please take this into consideration and always drive safely.

What about emergencies?

The law grants an exception for drivers to use a hand-held mobile device if dialing 911.

What about texting?

Wisconsin continues to have zero tolerance for texting while driving. Wisconsin law forbids driving any motor vehicle while composing or sending an electronic text message or an electronic mail message.

Driving Deserves Undivided Attention

Hands-held mobile device use is one of the most common factors in distracted driving.

- Mobile device use is a factor in one in four crashes nationwide.
- In 2014, there were 22,194 car crashes related to distracted driving in Wisconsin – that's one crash every 20 minutes.
- In 2015, there were 24,089 inattentive driving crashes, resulting in 10,640 injuries and 103 fatalities.
- At any given daylight moment in America, an estimated 660,000 drivers are using cell phones or manipulating electronic devices while driving, a number that has held steady since 2010.

Avoid the Risk. Stay Safe!

- Turn your phone off or switch to silent mode whenever you get behind the wheel. It can wait.
- If you are making a long drive, consider recording a voice mail message saying how long you'll be unavailable.
- If you must use a phone while driving, stop in a safe area such as a wayside or gas station.
- Ask passengers to lend a hand by making phone calls for you.
- Passengers – speak up and ask distracted drivers to stay alert.
- Parents – Talk to your kids about the dangers of distracted driving.

Source: [Wis. DOT](#)



Back to School Safety Tips

You can help protect your children from the most frequent kinds of school-related injuries by following these practical, proven tips.



Traveling to School

When parents talk about school safety these days, they're usually referring to the surge in violence at schools. But research shows that school-age children are actually nine times more likely to sustain an unintentional injury -- whether on the playground or in school -- than to be the victim of violence while at school. In fact, an estimated 2.2 million children ages 14 and under are injured in school-related accidents each year, according to the National SAFE KIDS Campaign.

Accidents can be prevented if parents are on the lookout for potential hazards. To help you keep your kids free from harm, here are some safety tips from SAFE KIDS, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Traveling to and from School

- Plan a walking route to school or the bus stop. Choose the most direct way with the fewest street crossings and, if possible, with intersections that have crossing guards.
- Walk the route with your child beforehand. Tell him or her to stay away from parks, vacant lots, fields and other places where there aren't many people around.
- Teach your child never to talk to strangers or accept rides or gifts from strangers. Remember, a stranger is anyone you or your children don't know well or don't trust.
- Be sure your child walks to and from school with a sibling, friend, or neighbor.
- Teach your kids -- whether walking, biking, or riding the bus to school -- to obey all traffic signals, signs and traffic officers. Remind them to be extra careful in bad weather.
- When driving kids, deliver and pick them up as close to the school as possible. Don't leave until they are in the schoolyard or building.
- If your child bikes to school, make sure he wears a helmet that meets one of the safety standards (U.S. CPSC, Snell, ANSI, ASTM, or Canadian). Research indicates that a helmet can reduce the risk of head injury by up to 85 percent.
- If your child rides a scooter to school, make sure she wears sturdy shoes, a helmet, kneepads and elbow pads. Children under age 12 should not ride motorized scooters, according to recent

recommendations from the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

- Teach children to arrive at the bus stop early, stay out of the street, wait for the bus to come to a complete stop before approaching the street, watch for cars and avoid the driver's blind spot.
- Remind your children to stay seated at all times and keep their heads and arms inside the bus while riding. When exiting the bus, children should wait until the bus comes to a complete stop, exit from the front using the handrail to avoid falls and cross the street at least 10 feet (or 10 giant steps) in front of the bus.
- Tell your child not to bend down in front of the bus to tie shoes or pick up objects, as the driver may not see him before starting to move.

Be sure that your child knows his or her home phone number and address, your work number, the number of another trusted adult and how to call 911 for emergencies.

On the Playground

- Check the playground equipment at your child's school. Look for hazards such as rusted or broken equipment and dangerous surfaces. The surface around the equipment should be covered with wood chips, mulch, sand, pea gravel, or mats made of safety-tested rubber or fiber material to prevent head injury when a child falls. Report any hazards to the school.
- Avoid any drawstrings on the hood or around the neck of jackets and sweatshirts. Drawstrings at the waist or bottom of jackets should extend no more than three inches long to prevent catching in car and school bus doors or getting caught on playground equipment.
- Make sure that the school's athletic director or a custodian anchors soccer goals into the ground so they won't tip over and crush a child.
- Teach children proper playground behavior: no pushing, shoving, or crowding.
- Give your child some strategies for coping with bullies. He should not give in to a bully's demands, but should simply walk away or tell the bully to stop. If the bullying continues, talk to the teacher.
- Make sure your child's school has up-to-date information on recalled toys and children's products. Schools, daycare providers and parents can receive recall information free of charge by calling the Consumer Product Safety Commission hotline at 800-638-2772; www.cpsc.gov.

Traffic Safety Awareness “A Community Committed to Keeping Kids Safe”

Please keep our kids safe by following these top ten safety tips when nearing or entering a school zone:

- Slow down
- Be alert
- Be patient
- Stay off cell phones
- Know your specific school rules
- Walk or bike to school
- Follow bike safety rules
- Cross at crosswalks
- Stop car when loading and unloading
- Enjoy this time with your child



Check-Ups and Immunizations

It's a good idea to take your child in for a physical and eye exam before school starts. If your child will be participating in a sports activity, your family doctor may have to sign a release form to permit your child to participate.

Most schools require your child's immunization shots are up-to-date. Remember that each state has different immunization requirements. Let your healthcare provider know if you have any questions or concerns about the vaccines your child is scheduled to receive.

School entry may require documentation of immunization records. Find out what your child's school requires and bring any school forms for your healthcare provider to fill out and sign. Be sure to keep your own copy of any records. Failure to keep immunizations up-to-date could prevent your child from attending school.

Source: <http://USA.gov>; <http://CDC.gov/vaccines>

How to Talk About Bullying

Parents, school staff, and other caring adults have a role to play in preventing bullying. They can:

- Help kids [understand bullying](#). Talk about what bullying is and how to stand up to it safely. Tell kids bullying is unacceptable. Make sure kids know how to get help.
- [Keep the lines of communication open](#). Check in with kids often. Listen to them. Know their friends, ask about school, and understand their concerns.
- [Encourage kids to do what they love](#). Special activities, interests, and hobbies can boost confidence, help kids make friends, and protect them from bullying behavior.
- [Model how to treat others with kindness and respect](#).

Help Kids Understand Bullying

Kids who know [what bullying is](#) can better identify it. They can talk about bullying if it happens to them or others. Kids need to know ways to safely stand up to bullying and how to get help.

- Encourage kids to speak to a trusted adult if they are bullied or see others being bullied. The adult can give comfort, support, and advice, even if they can't solve the problem directly. Encourage the child to [report bullying](#) if it happens.
- Talk about [how to stand up to kids who bully](#). Give tips, like using humor and saying “stop” directly and confidently. Talk about what to do if those actions don't work, like walking away
- Talk about strategies for staying safe, such as staying near adults or groups of other kids.
- [Urge them to help kids who are bullied](#) by showing kindness or getting help.
- Watch the short [webisodes](#) and [discuss them](#) with kids.



Source: <http://Stopbullying.gov>

Return via inter-office mail marked “Safety Suggestion Box,” give to a Safety Committee member, or put in Safety Suggestion Box at the City/County Govt. Center, 4th floor lobby.

Safety Suggestion

Date: _____

Please share any safety concern or suggestion:

Name (optional) _____